

# THE GIVVER

— Saturday, May 11, 1872. —



"I was requested to read the newspaper to him"—p. 498.

## TWO STORIES IN ONE.

BY WILLIAM GILBERT, AUTHOR OF "DE PROFUNDIS," "SHIRLEY HALL ASTLUM," ETC

### CHAPTER XI.—THE EMERALD EARRING.

I DO not think a fit of ill-humour had ever hung over me so long as it did after my quarrel with Edmond. Try all I would, I could not get over it. What appeared to me especially strange was, that

struggle as I did against my vexation—for I felt how absurd it was—and much as I endeavoured to prove to myself how ridiculous was Edmond's suspicion that I was the attraction for M. de Vernieu's visits, the

more did it appear to me, in spite of myself, that such might possibly be the case. The more I argued against it, the more frequently did the idea start up before me. But what annoyed me particularly was the word "mountebank," which Edmond had used when speaking of M. de Vernieul. Why should he have made use of a term so insulting? In this frame of mind I continued till the day before M. de Vernieul was to pay his visit, when my father was seized with a violent cold, which confined him to the house. My mother wrote a letter to M. de Vernieul, informing him of the circumstance, and proposing a day in the following week for their next meeting.

To say the truth, I felt some relief at the letter being written, as I now flattered myself I should have time to get over my ill-humour, and receive him with the calm civility due to an intelligent friend of my father's—nothing more. The next day my father's cold was worse, and my mother insisted on his not quitting the drawing-room, or attending to business in any way. She argued that it was an imperative necessity to nurse a cold at the commencement, it being easily cured if cared for in time, but which became the more difficult the longer neglected.

Well, my father somewhat reluctantly obeyed her. By way of making him as comfortable as possible, she had the easy chair placed by the fire, and there, with a sort of black silk skull-cap on his head, slippers on his feet, and wrapped in a dressing-gown, he was ordered to remain till she gave him permission to move. By way of making his forced inaction as little objectionable as possible, I was requested to read the newspaper to him, while my mother, her household duties being over, seated herself opposite, and went on with her knitting, paying attention to my reading the while. From time to time she cast a scrutinising glance at my father, to see if he wanted anything, or was likely to disturb the economy of the arrangements she had prepared for him. At last, without the slightest apparent cause, she came to the conclusion that he was not sufficiently wrapped up, and she hurriedly left the room. A moment after, she returned with a shawl, which she insisted on his putting over his head and shoulders, to protect him from any draught that might enter when the door was open. He mildly but fruitlessly remonstrated with her. She would hear of no opposition, and insisted on his immediately wearing the shawl. My poor father, who, when he was ill, generally submitted with the patience of a lamb to my mother's despotism—for in all cases of sickness she was despotic indeed—offered no further resistance, and my mother proceeded to place the shawl over his head and shoulders in the most approved manner. This she at last accomplished to her satisfaction, and was in the act of fastening the shawl under his chin, when the door of the drawing-room opened, and M. de Vernieul was announced.

The ridiculous appearance we made at the time came so irresistibly before me, that the newspaper helplessly dropped from my hand, and making way for M. de Vernieul to advance, I dexterously left the room, leaving my father and mother to make the best of the case they could without my assistance. To say the truth, I had another reason for vanishing with so much celerity. Although my mother had instilled into me when a child the principle that a lady should always be fit to be seen, no matter at what hour of the day, the reader—if a lady—will readily admit that a young girl may appear to better advantage in one costume than another. At any rate, that was my opinion, not only when I was young, but it is so at the present day.

Well, ringing my bell for the servant, I rapidly made what I considered a few becoming alterations in my appearance, and wearing on my countenance as calm an expression as possible, I again entered the drawing-room, where I found M. de Vernieul already in conversation with my father. When he saw me he expressed great distress at my father's illness.

"And what makes it the more painful to me," he said, "is, that he informs me a letter was written to me yesterday, to put off our engagement. Either the postman or the servant at my house must be very much to blame for having omitted to deliver the letter to me. I proposed returning, but your amiable parents insist on my remaining, and you see I have obeyed them."

I merely bowed, and M. de Vernieul placing a chair for me, I joined the group. I will not trouble the reader with any account of the conversation that passed; it generally ran on the most commonplace subjects. My father, on one occasion, attempted to speak on the Huguenot question, but my mother, who had come to the conclusion that the less he said the better for his cold, requested he would not fatigue himself, but wait till he was better to talk over the subject. It struck me that our visitor, although he made no remark, seemed by no means to object to my mother's theory, so that, in point of fact, the conversation was carried on by us three, my father calmly listening the while. I must say, on the whole, that trifling as the subjects brought forward might have been, our visitor made them most attractive to me, though in self-justification, I should state my mother seemed not less pleased with him than myself.

The next time he came, my father had sufficiently recovered to leave the house, and they went together to inspect the parish registers. That day he dined with us, and it was somewhat at a late hour when he left.

The day for the "assembly" was now rapidly approaching, and great indeed were the preparations made, both by my mother and myself, to do justice to the occasion. From what M. Dubarry had told us it

was evidently to be a very brilliant affair, in fact, one of the finest gatherings of the season, all the *élite* of London having been invited to attend it. For my mother, the affair itself was the only source of attraction; but let me confess the truth—there was another, and far greater, for me. In spite of myself—nay, more, in spite of all the arguments and reasoning I could bring forward to my assistance, it was impossible to deny the fact that M. de Vernieu had made a far greater impression on my heart, not only than any man had ever done before, but than I had hitherto imagined it possible for any man to have succeeded in doing; and yet not one word of love had ever passed between us, nor had he cast on me one look that might not have been seen and admitted as perfectly innocent by the most scrupulous. I am able to say still more. Although I deny having either by word or deed allowed me to see the power he had obtained over me, or that he had found the slightest favour in my eyes, not only was I aware that he loved me, but also that he knew I loved him in return. Although, as I said before, he had not in the slightest manner declared his passion for me, I felt that I was in the shadow of a coming event, but how, when, or where that event would take place I knew not.

My mother evidently saw my anxiety, or that there was something weighing on my mind, for on two or three occasions she had found me so completely abstracted that she had to speak to me more than once before I heard her. Fortunately for me, her suspicions of the cause fell in a wrong direction. The consultations we had had respecting the dresses we were to wear had, as I think I before stated, been grave and profound. Bless her heart, with all her admirable qualities she possessed one little weakness—perhaps the only one—and that she had in all probability inherited from her French ancestors—a love of dress. Her own dress on the occasion of the ball having been a subject of much thought to her, she naturally imagined it was the same with me. Whenever she saw an abstracted fit coming over me, she invariably introduced the subject of our dress, and this, at any rate for the moment, had the effect of again calling me to myself.

Among other difficult subjects to be decided was what ornaments my mother should wear, or rather, as she had but few, how best she could make the most of them, and compensate for the want of others by the richness and good taste of her dress.

"It is a very different thing with you, my dear," she said to me the day before the ball, when I was attempting to assure her she would look remarkably well without more ornaments than she possessed; "it is very well, I say, for you; at your age jewellery is not required. The plainer a young lady is dressed, the more attractive she appears; but as we grow older, and our personal attractions begin to fade, their loss should be supplied by adventitious means. And nothing is so becoming in that respect to a lady of

my age as good jewellery. Often have I told your dear father that he ought to get me better jewellery than I have, but he always puts it off, saying that few people in our position in life had better than I already possessed, and that I looked well in everything; and now, my dear, you see the result. Here am I, at my time of life, without any other jewellery than a gold chain, my rings, my pearl necklace, and those antiquated emerald earrings."

"But, mamma," I said, "I understood those earrings were very valuable; papa always said so."

"I do not dispute their being of considerable value, and that as far as the stones go it would be difficult to find two more perfect. The diamonds round them, I also admit, are of excellent quality and water. But then, you see, they are completely out of date. It is easy for your papa to say they are more than two centuries old, and were worn at the court of Louis Quatorze by his great-great-grandmother, when that disreputable monarch came to the throne, but still they are totally out of date at the present day. And as to their being of greater value for their antiquity, as he pretends, that would be all very well if I could explain to every person who saw them their history; but as I cannot do that, their value in that respect is next to nothing. As it is, I verily believe that one-half of those who see them will consider them sham."

"Oh, mamma! that is not likely."

"Very well, my dear," said my mother, after a moment's hesitation; "fetch them, and let us look at them again."

I then left the room, and soon returned with the box containing the earrings. My mother now went to the glass, and I assisted her in putting one earring into the ear.

"There now, mamma," I said, holding up the candle to her that she might see the effect better, "I am sure they will become you vastly. Your fair complexion is just the one to set off an emerald to the best advantage. On a dark complexion they do not make half the effect, and that you know yourself."

"Nonsense, my dear, I do not know anything of the kind. But candidly, Clara, do you really think I can wear these earrings?"

"I do indeed, mamma, and with your complexion they will be very becoming."

My mother appeared to hesitate a moment, and then said to me, "Give me the other earring and let me put it in my ear, and then we shall better be able to judge how they will both look together."

I gave her the earring, and on opening the hook so as to pass it into her ear, the gold broke off short in her hand.

"There now, my dear," said my mother, "that settles the matter. Wear them I cannot, so we must determine what can be done to supply their place."

The earrings were now put back into the box, and we sat down to consult in what manner we could arrange my mother's headdress, so that their loss might not be observed, and we were in the midst of our conversation when my father, looking pale and haggard, entered the room, and the conversation dropped.

"I am afraid you have over fatigued yourself again to-day," said my mother; "at your time of life you should be more careful, my dear."

"It is not from fatigue," he replied, "for I have not left the warehouse to-day, but I really feel exceedingly unwell, and, all things considered, I think it would be a very imprudent thing for me to go to the Embassy to-morrow."

"Oh! do not say so, my dear, I am sure you will enjoy yourself very much. Besides that I shall feel quite lonely without you, and I am sure Clara will lose half the pleasure of the evening if you are not there."

"I am sorry to disappoint you both," said my father, "but it cannot be, and I may as well determine at once that I will not go. Your mother, my dear, is quite capable of acting as a chaperon for you, and as well known as you both are to M. Dubarry the attaché, and De Vernieul his cousin, I am sure they will take care that you pass a pleasant evening. Now do not let me hear a word more on the subject. Go, and be as happy as you can, though I very much doubt if so worldly an amusement can give you real satisfaction."

We preferred to make no reply, and the subject then dropped, and shortly afterwards we separated for the night.

## CHAPTER XII.

M. DE VERNIEUL.

THE next morning my father was so indisposed that my mother and myself admitted it would be imprudent for him to accompany us, and we determined to arrange the best way we could for ourselves. I need hardly say that during the whole of the day we were occupied in making preparations for the evening, though rather with respect to my mother's toilet than my own, for on this occasion she was fastidious in the extreme. She was especially particular about her headdress, which she wished to arrange in such a manner as would render the absence of earrings as little noticeable as possible. For the same reason, gentle reader, that I gave you on the occasion of the last assembly, I will not attempt to describe the dresses we wore.

The evening at last arrived, the hired glass coach drove up to the door, and a man of the name of Derigny, a waiter at a tavern in Bishopsgate Street, who from being of French Huguenot descent was known to my father, was engaged to act as our servant. We had been informed by the attaché that the present gathering would be a far more brilliant

one than the last, and from the number of carriages drawn up in file when we arrived in Portland Place, it seemed to be more numerous attended.

At last our turn came, and we descended from the carriage and entered the house. After being ushered up-stairs and introduced to His Excellency and the Princess his wife, we retired, and I took the opportunity of looking round the room to see if there were present any people I knew, my thoughts, I admit, principally resting on M. de Vernieul. I did not, however, see him, but my eye fell on another individual, on whom, since we had received the invitation, I had scarcely passed a thought—Colonel Morpeth. He had already recognised us, and was making his way towards us. After a few complimentary expressions at the pleasure of meeting us again, he invited me to dance the first quadrille with him. For a moment I hesitated, but afterwards accepted. To say the truth I was somewhat annoyed with M. de Vernieul, to whom I had been engaged for the first quadrille, and I thought it would be but a hint to him that I did not feel flattered by his absence.

We took our places for the dance as one of the side couples, and the colonel entered into conversation with me, but upon what subject I quite forget. Indeed, I paid comparatively but little attention to his remarks, although they were gentlemanly and amiable in the extreme. To say the truth, I was surprised at my own indifference, and I attempted to account for it. The only conclusion I could arrive at, however, was one but little complimentary to my own good taste. At the former ball he was dressed in uniform, now he was *en bourgeoisie*. As soon as I arrived at that conclusion, I felt more vexed than before, and possibly his remarks were still more unheeded, although I attempted to reply to them with readiness, and appear pleased with his conversation. The dance passed off in a somewhat unsatisfactory manner, and the colonel then led me to my mother, who had been seated near us.

A few moments afterwards, M. de Vernieul made his appearance. He hurried up to us, and with much sorrow in his tone and manner, regretted he had been too late for his appointment, but hoped I would allow him to be my partner in the next dance. The moment before he arrived I had received and accepted another offer, and possibly with more exultation in my tone than I was aware of, I told him of the fact. He seemed deeply mortified, and it struck me that he cast on me a somewhat reproachful glance, but if so, it immediately faded, and he stood near us with a sorrowful expression on his face.

The signal for the next dance was given, and my partner led me to our place. As he did so I noticed M. de Vernieul take the seat I had occupied next my mother. Occasionally during the quadrille I glanced at him for a moment, and found he had still the same sorrowful expression of countenance, though he was talking to my mother with the greatest as-



siduity, she listening to him attentively. I now began to feel vexed with myself for the sorrow I had caused him, and I determined on the next occasion I would not refuse him as my partner.

The quadrille over, M. de Vernieul resigned his seat to me. I spoke somewhat more graciously to him, but although he answered me readily enough, there was still the same sorrowful look on his countenance. We conversed together for some time, I expecting every moment he would ask me to dance with him, and beginning to feel really angry that he did not. My anger was still further increased by the signal for the next dance being given, when he calmly left me, and advancing towards another lady led her out. So annoyed was I at his behaviour that I had great difficulty in restraining my feelings so far as not to let my mother observe me.

Several cavaliers now offered themselves as my partner, and I would willingly have accepted one to show M. de Vernieul of how little importance it was to me his dancing with another lady, but this time it was a waltz, and my father had set his face against the dance, and prohibited me from learning it. But why go on with these uninteresting details? Suffice it to say that we did as many other young people have done before us, have done since, and will continue to do to the end of the chapter—we sulked on for some hours.

At last my ill-humour gave way, and about midnight I accepted M. de Vernieul's invitation to dance with him. I remarked to him that I had not seen his cousin, the attaché, and he told me that he had been sent on a mission to Paris, and his return was uncertain. Between the intervals in the second figure he said to me, with much sorrow in his tone, "You cannot think how much I regret having arrived here this evening at so late an hour. My conduct must have appeared very ungentlemanly in your eyes."

"Oh, not at all," I replied; "I concluded you were engaged with some other occupation more agreeable to you."

"So far from that being the case, the subject that detained me was to me a very painful one. This afternoon I received a letter from the French Minister of War, ordering me within a week to join my regiment at Verdun."

All desire to jest with him had now left me. If his feelings at being obliged to leave England were as painful as my own at that moment, he was indeed worthy of pity. The idea then occurred to me that possibly my feelings might be expressed on my countenance, and I asked him, with as much indifference in my tone as I could assume, when he intended to leave England.

"In three days' time," he replied; "on Wednesday next at the latest."

"Then we shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again before you go," I said.

"Oh, pardon me, I propose to call on your father and mother, and take my farewell of your family the day after to-morrow," and then, after a moment's pause, and looking at me earnestly the while, he continued, "if you do not think twelve o'clock too early an hour for them to receive me. It would be ungrateful indeed on my part not to call and personally thank them for the kindness they have shown me. Besides, my father has also commissioned me to tell him how much obliged he is for the satisfactory intelligence he has afforded him, and also to ask permission to address him again on the subject should it be found necessary."

"My father, I am sure, will be happy at any time to afford you all the assistance in his power," I replied.

Our conversation was here interrupted, but at intervals we conversed together freely enough. Although M. de Vernieul said nothing more than those standing near us might not have listened to with the most perfect indifference, there was a certain melancholy about his tone which informed me he was exceedingly unhappy. To say the truth, most thankful was I when the quadrille was over, for I had then but little spirit for dancing. It was at last finished, and after taking a turn round the room, M. de Vernieul conducted me to my seat. My mother had left it, and he seated himself by my side.

"I am afraid," he said in an under tone, "the favour I am going to ask you is a great indiscretion on my part, but the temptation is too great for me to resist, and I trust you will excuse me. I have much I wish to say to you, but there is no opportunity of saying it, even if I had the courage. Now, however, that I am about to leave England, I have summoned up the courage of despair."

I made an effort to change the conversation by saying I hoped he intended to return to England again.

"I hope so, indeed. I should be very miserable if I thought the contrary."

"Still, your presence may be required in France," I remarked.

"My term of duty is for six months, that over I shall return immediately."

"Of that you cannot be certain," I said. "During the time you are in France you do not know what attractions may rise up to keep you there."

This I attempted to say with a slight trace of sarcasm in my tone. He easily understood my allusion, but made no further reply than saying, "You can hardly imagine the great happiness you would afford me if you will allow me a few minutes' conversation with you alone when I call at your house."

"On what subject?" I inquired.

"Oh, that I will explain fully at the time," he replied; "I cannot do so now, surrounded as we are by strangers. But be assured of this, I wish to say nothing which a man of honour may not

with perfect justice and good taste address to an honourable lady. Now pray let me beg of you to grant this favour I ask. If you only knew how happy you would make me, and how miserable I shall be without it, both pity and generosity would induce you to grant my request."

I almost forget what answer I made him. I have no doubt it was a very silly and contradictory one. I think I remember telling him that I hardly knew whether I should be justified in doing so, even if it were possible, which I much doubted. He again begged me to make him the promise that I would grant him an interview, but I said it was impossible, although now I can easily admit my refusal was couched in such a tone as to give him the assurance that my words and intentions were diametrically opposed to each other. Finding we were attracting, by the earnestness of our conversation, the attention of the bystanders, I asked him to conduct me to another room to find my mother. When we had succeeded in discovering her, she was in earnest

conversation with the colonel, and Lady Morpeth his mother. As we approached, her ladyship advanced and addressed me with great kindness of manner; so much so indeed that, engaged as my thoughts had lately been on totally different matters, I could not help perceiving how erroneous had been the impression I had formed of her on the last occasion of our meeting. We conversed together for some moments, I still leaning on M. de Vernieu's arm, who from his ignorance of the English language could take no part with us. It struck me, however, that although his demeanour at the time was marked with perfect courtesy, there was on his face an expression of anger. And yet I hardly know how to describe it. Perhaps I had better use the hackneyed comparison, that it was the placidity of a thunder-cloud, from which, though tranquil and sombre in appearance, vivid lightning may burst at any moment. And the same expression continued on his face till we left the Embassy.

(To be continued.)

## "LE GRAND LIVRE."

BY THE REV. J. B. OWEN, M.A., VICAR OF ST. JUDE'S, CHELSEA.

**A**LMOST everything is termed *grand* in France. So common is the word that it simply loses its effect. But their book called "Le Grand Livre" is really a great Book, comprising entries of the utmost importance to the nation. Like our own Domesday Book, its contents are constant matters of reference and authority. There is one Book, the value of which towers above all other books, as its Divine Author sits infinitely high above all other beings. In its majestic simplicity it has no epithet at all, standing out alone, as Mont Blanc in the Alpine range; its name is the Bible, literally "*the Book*"—the Book of God. Book of books, as He whose Holy Spirit inspires it is the "Light of lights, very God of very God," its influential efficiency will probably be limited to this life. If by faith we avail ourselves of its teaching in this stage of being, our acquaintance with Holy Scripture will prove to have been the most momentous study of our lives. Without undervaluing other studies, if "with all our gettings we get understanding," the most illiterate disciple of the Bible will be "wiser unto salvation," without any other learning, than the most highly-cultured mind, though blessed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, could be without the Bible. Without faith in that sacred record, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God." Faith in that Book, with reliance on its precious promises, obedience of its holy precepts, acceptance of its blessed Saviour,

expectation of the fulfilment of its glorious or tremendous prophecies, is the alone preparation for our present and eternal interest in the "Book of Life."

"Within this awful volume lies  
The mystery of mysteries.  
But better had he ne'er been born  
Who reads to laugh, or reads to scorn."

In the recent incendiary fires of the Commune of Paris, there was one important document, absolutely essential to be preserved as the registry of the commerce and investments of the French nation, which was rescued by the heroism of two humble men employed in the office where it was lodged—viz., in the Bureau of the Minister of Finance. The great Bureau itself is a heap of cinders, but the greater Book was saved. Its designation is "Le Grand Livre," or the Great Book. The loss of the "Grand Livre" would have been a heavier calamity than the fall of the grand Louvre. Palatial architecture may be replaced, but financial records cannot be restored. The Revelations speak of books that were opened in heaven, and of "another book out of which the dead, small and great, were judged." No fire of earthly or of hellish malice can reach that book, which, like the Gospel, as a savour of life unto life, or else a savour of death unto death, will prove a Book of Life to some, and to others the "confirmation of the sentence of death within themselves." We do not sufficiently ponder and realise into what details the final judgment will

enter. The "account of the deeds done in the body" will not be dispatched in a brief and careless summary. "The discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" will astonish and dismay the finally impenitent with the minute, as well as entire acquaintance his judgment will display.

Judge L—, of Virginia, was one of the most prompt and laborious men who have done honour to the American bench. A certain medical practitioner, noted for his extravagant charges, had attended a poor man during a long illness, and at its close presented a most exorbitant bill, which the patient refused to pay unless large deductions were made. The doctor insisted upon the whole, and at once brought his action. During the case, Judge L— asked to see the account. It was found to consist of a single line: "Medical attendance, so much." The judge required the plaintiff to furnish the items; and on these being declined, the case was thrown out of court.

On his way home, the doctor thus accosted the judge: "That was an honest account, judge—an honest account."

"I know nothing about it," said the sharp, decisive voice of the judge—"nothing about it, sir."

After an embarrassing silence, the doctor began again—"Judge L—, we shall all have to give an account—an account, sir, of all the deeds done in the body."

"I know that, sir," retorted the judge; "but it will be an item account—an item account, sir."

It is not I, but the great Judge of all who speaks—"I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." There are men who would burn, if they could, God's Book of Remembrance, as ruthlessly as the ruffians of the Commune essayed to annihilate all the records, commercial, historical, and judicial, of their country. Their purpose was not merely to overturn the government, but to destroy the law. But "the triumphing of the wicked is short." It is a blaze that burns itself out; but there is "a fire that is not quenched." There are reckless, desperate unbelievers, who would usurp God's government, and abolish his law, if they could. But the "Grand Livre" of the courts of heaven is beyond their reach. That "other book will be opened," out of whose awful pages they will be judged; and woe to every soul whose name shall not be found written in "the book of life." It is no escape from this principle of a final judgment, to suggest that the book in the Apocalypse is a figurative book. It is a figure, but every figure in the Bible, as truly as the figures of arithmetic, are the representatives of corresponding facts; and the fact implied in the figure of a book of record here is the impossibility of sin escaping recollection—that the ill word, long forgotten by

the evil speaker, and the ill deed that leaves no visible trace on the mind of the evildoer, will be reproduced by the expanded power of memory, where they had so long lain hid. There will be no absolute need of the unerring testimony of an external book. Man will be his own remembrancer; his own memory will be his judge, and bitter, awful, and without hope will be the flashing reminiscences of that day to every soul who cannot plead the Divine amnesty, the Gospel of that merciful obliteration in the blood of atonement, presented in the promise to them that have fled for refuge to Christ—viz., "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." If the pardoned believer himself recalls the memory of his sins, it will not be to condemn him, but to magnify the unspeakable mercy which God in Christ vouchsafed him, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, taking them out of the way, and nailing them to his cross."

If revelation had not made this survival of the memory a certainty, its probability may be inferred from familiar phenomena illustrating the faculty of recalling events in this life. We all know what is meant by an old man's memory, by which, when the scenes belonging to the interval between early and later life seem effaced, as if they had not been, the early scenes themselves are recalled with ease, whether they be of a joyous or of a sorrowful nature. We have all heard of well-authenticated cases where, under the magnetic influence of a sudden and impending death, a whole life's memories have been telegraphed back to the soul with a vividness which has left a perceptible impression when rescue has been effected, and the bitterness of death has passed away. The same power of rapid recall, instantaneous as the electric circuit, has reproduced the story of a long life in a few moments of dreaming.

There is an incident of a careless, irreligious man, killed by a fall from his horse, of whom it was said—

"Between the saddle and the ground  
He mercy sought, and mercy found."

And viewed in connection with these extraordinary exertions of the remembering powers, under the stimulation of an exciting crisis, such a case is not impossible. Too extraordinary to be safely relied on, as any reason for postponing repentance, and accepting by faith in Christ the terms of pardon; but nothing is extraordinary with God, and therefore with him nothing is impossible. It is as if at the moment of danger that seems about to mark the dissolution of our connection with every period of time, that the past and future suddenly bear with a mysterious force of responsible relation on the present, and bring all three together—past, present, and future, into one and the same glimpse of con-

sciousness, like a premature eternity. At such crises, the memory betrays latent powers of recall, of which the possessor had never till that moment been aware, and perhaps he learns for the first time, that all our senses, and the sense of memory pre-eminently, will have proved ordinances, the use or abuse of which will tell upon our future being.

These phenomena illustrate the more permanent powers of the memory, when it should please God to evoke them, in the service of its Maker. Inasmuch that it is quite consistent with the nature of men, that the memory, which, with its present limited action, becomes the instrument of holy pleasure, or of exquisite pain, should officiate as the faculty to make us conscious of the final justice which condemns the impenitent, or of the forbearing mercy which redeems the believer in Jesus. The reflection should serve to invest with an habitual gravity our daily conversation. Knowing that not a single word we utter, however thoughtlessly, has been heard the last of; that it has been recorded in God's "Grand Livre," of whose imperishable entries the blessed Author says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The building in which the French Great Book was treasured up was burned to the ground, but not a leaf was scorched of the precious document itself. A day comes when the heavens and every created element shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all that therein is shall be burnt up; and it is on the awful fact that all these things shall be dissolved St. Peter bases his appeal for "all holy conversation and godliness." There is no separating the conversation from the godliness. Good words, apart from their corresponding deeds, are sins enhanced by the guilt of so many hypocrisies; and good deeds, apart from good words, are dumb and sullen virtues, which give not God the glory. Hence, both words and deeds will be judged together, and there is no graver responsibility belongs to man than the present exercise of his gift of speech. It is the organ of so much mischief, or else of so much mercy, according as our ordinary speech is seasoned with salt, or else poisoned by thoughtlessness, that there are men who had better been born dumb than have proved to be the dangerous talkers they were in their generation, to themselves and others. Had the subjects of their conversation been more generally taken from God's "Grand Livre" there would have been less scope for objectionable discourse. The spirit of the inspired Book would have inspired more serious habits of reflection, and holy and intellectual thoughts and words would have characterised the manner of life. A diligent student of his Bible becomes so

imbued with its tone of lofty thought, that, like Peter among the servants of the high priest "his speech bewrayeth him." Men recognise the fountain from the clearness and purity of the streams. As their Master's "word was with power," so, in a secondary reflective sense, is theirs, because the echo of *his*, and like an echo of distant music, weaker in tone, but harmonising in tune with its primary note, there is an assimilative charm in earnest godly conversation, before which prejudice often melts, and not seldom impenitence is brought to tears. So Christian speakers preach Christ unawares. One of the earliest symptoms of declension in religion is suffering ourselves, or others without protest, to speak lightly of the sacred Scriptures. "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" If God's Book is to give place to any other book, it is not Dagon falling down before the ark, but the ark before Dagon; and if ever so great a sin and calamity befall our land, we shall incur the malediction pronounced on them who "preach any other Gospel than that we have preached," of whom the Spirit of truth preclaims, "Let him be accursed!"

We admire the fidelity to a great trust, and the brave daring of the peril of death, which prompteth those gallant Frenchmen to rescue, at all hazards, their national "Grand Livre" from its lawless incendiaries. Where a higher love of truth, for the truth's sake, animates the heart of a believer in the Bible, he will maintain with a holier chivalry under the fiery scorn of unbelief, his allegiance to the Divine teaching of inspiration, avowing with the noble Ruth, who cast in her lot for life and death with her kindred in the covenant, "where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried."

It was a bad sign of the public mind of Israel, when a Jehoiakim's penknife could venture first to mutilate and then destroy by fire the holy volume of God's messages; but it was a worse sign that there were found those who looked on at the foul deed, and "were not afraid." And it is bad sign enough of public feeling in England to hear the speeches and read the books in opposition to the blessed Book of God; but it is a worse sign that nominal Christians can listen to such speeches and tolerate such books without a loyal standing out for God, without jealously contending for the honour of Christ and the glory of Christianity.

Christians! do not be satisfied with anything short of a personal Christianity, which is ever ready wherever you are, in the midst of hollow-hearted friends, or carnal enemies, or mere strangers, to confess from the heart without a blush—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every soul that believeth."





"Erect and calm he stands"—p. 506.

## SONGS AT EVENING-TIME—III.

BY S. J. STONE, B.A.; AUTHOR OF "LYRA FIDELIUM."

THE DEATH-SONG OF MOSES, IN BENEDICTION OF JESHURUN.—Deut. xxxiii. 1-5; 23-29.



N reverent sorrow still,  
Beneath the awful hill,  
Hard by the borders of the sacred land,  
What time the evening light  
Glow on the porphyry height,  
The pilgrim thousands of Jeshurun\* stand.

Their prophet's form sublime,  
Unharm'd by toil or time,  
His force unbroken and his eye not dim,  
Stands in their sight alone,  
As on an altar stone,  
'Neath yon sepulchral peaks of Abarim.

An oracle from death,  
They feel his latest breath  
Over their souls in waves of music flow,  
Or ere he fall on sleep  
Within that valley deep  
Which only God and His great angels know.

The shadow of Death's wings  
No cold depression flings  
On that great spirit and majestic form;  
Erect and calm he stands,  
And with less failing hands  
Than when of old † he ruled the battle's storm.

The tribes are gathered there,  
Jeshurun, strong and fair,  
A tree the Lord hath planted, spreadeth wide;  
God's poet and their king, ‡  
Let his last utterance sing  
The song of those whom God hath magnified.

"From Sinai rolled in flame,  
From Seir Jehovah came,  
From Paran's summits did His glory shine!  
Ten thousand saints were there,  
And through the deep, dark air  
Flashed from His hands His law's terrific sign.

"Yet He hath loved His own,  
Elect are they alone  
To walk the world within His hands' embrace,  
Or in seclusion sweet  
To listen at His feet  
His message manifold of truth and grace.

"There is none like to Thee!  
Who art and art to be,  
God of Jeshurun, riding on the sky!  
Vain are their foes' alarms,  
While Thine eternal arms  
Beneath them ever in the darkness lie.

\* A poetic expression applied to Israel, as God's elect and covenant people.

† see Exod. xvii. 11.    ‡ Deut. xxxiii. 5.

"So loving is thy Lord,  
Shield of thine help, and sword  
Of thine excelling, Israel the blest!  
So after pilgrim toil  
Shalt thou divide the spoil  
In yonder land of everlasting rest."

Ceases the prophet's song;  
And from the mourning throng  
He turns alone towards the distant steep:  
Slowly and thankfully  
He wins the summit high,  
As passing from glad toil to welcome sleep.

Yet once he turns again,  
And far o'er stream and plain  
One brief blest moment to his gaze is given,  
Unveiled in vision there  
The land exceeding fair,  
His antepast of heaven under heaven!

Then lo! upon his face  
Descends a strange new grace,  
Not like the splendour caught on Horeb's  
height,  
But softer, as the ray  
Of yonder waning day  
Is tenderer, deeper, than the noonday light:

Intenser, with the power  
Won from a greater hour  
Then Sinai's, for his visionary feet  
Stand now on Zion's hill,  
And there the dews distil  
Upon his soul Love's unction full and sweet.

What though his lowly grave  
Lie this side Jordan's wave,  
What though for his own sin his soul is sad,  
His vision, fixed afar  
On Jacob's orient star,  
Beholds that Greater Prophet and is glad!

Now let the summons come  
That calls the pilgrim home!  
Patience and hope made perfect, let him rest:  
Sure of the morning light,  
God's child in the still night  
Lays his tired head upon his Father's breast.

His grave, who knows doth keep:  
We know but that his sleep  
Is sweet in Him whom he foreshadowed here,  
And soon his song again  
Shall swell the choral strain,  
When on that visioned hill CHRIST and His saints  
appear.

## JEALOUSY.

## CHAPTER II.

"There never yet was human power  
Which could evade, if unforgiven,  
The patient search and vigil long  
Of him who treasures up a wrong."



HAT evening Robert brought Alice and Miss Standaside to the lecture, and some one meeting them who took charge of the latter lady, our more intimate friends walked home alone.

"A dull lecture, I thought," said Wilson.

"Yes, I suppose so; indeed, I can hardly tell," answered Alice, and then she felt she had said a foolish thing.

"Why there was not one experiment in it all, and I thought you loved the experiments."

"Indeed, I don't think it matters much—you know I'm not very scientific; I like the change and the company—that is, I mean the people—don't you know?" faltered Alice, who, to tell the truth, scarcely knew what she was talking about.

Her attention was disturbed by finding herself alone with Robert, after what he had said about his prospects, and still more after something in his tone and manner while he said it. She scarcely felt safe with him; she feared, and knew not why; she wished she were safe home; and yet I am quite certain that if she had arrived there without more being said, her sweet brown eyes would have been very red next morning. But this was not to be.

When she said, "I like the people," Robert turned round his face to see hers in the moonlight, and said, oh! so softly, "Dear Miss Grey, I am so glad to have been one of them, for I would give the whole world, and my life besides, to have you like me."

And Alice said, very timidly indeed, "I always liked you, Mr. Wilson."

"Ah, yes, but that won't satisfy me now. I don't care to be liked as one of a scientific gathering; I want to be liked specially—I am greedy. Alice—dear Alice, I want you to like me as I love you, more than all the world."

As he looked at her, I think he must have seen her face grow glorious, and her eyes must have seemed more luminous to him than the sky would have been if every star had expanded into a full moon. There is no splendour in the world like that of even a plain face when the love that is within knows for the first time that it is free, quite free, to shine out and be expressed. And the face of Alice Grey was anything but a plain one. Her love beamed out of large deep-brown eyes, and its lustre lit up a perfectly oval face, a sweet piquant nose that had no Greek stiffness about it, and would have baffled all the sculptors in Rome to do it justice—the smallest, ripest, archest mouth

—the most perfect of dimpled chins, and a glory of dark curls that made a delightful frame for that delightful picture.

For my part, so far from wondering that Alice had two lovers, I am only surprised that she had not two dozen.

So perhaps Robert also thought, or perhaps he was only coquetting when he said, after a shy pause on her part, "Do not answer in a hurry, dearest love, unless you can do so without misgiving. Consider what you would say, and I shall wait till to-morrow for my fate—for my heart's life or death."

Ah, crafty Robert, no woman ever let the man she loved excel her in generosity, and I suspect you know it, my fine fellow.

Our sweet girl dropped her left hand lightly upon the strong arm which sustained her right, and looked up straight and fearlessly into his face as she answered, "Dear Robert, you could not ask me for more love than you have had from me this many a day."

They went on in silence, and once more, to a couple of brave young hearts, London was as glad-some as Paradise; once more two pairs of feet trod the hard pavement, in the yellow gaslight or the shadow of creaking signboards, as lightly as if they sank deep in heavy-perfumed roses, where the white moonbeams alternated with glinting shade of limes and cedars, that thrilled and palpitated with bubbling song of unseen nightingales. Their silence had a closer communion than any that words express.

Hope was mingled with anticipation in their blissful reverie, and fruition and expectancy were blended so exquisitely into one, that they could not have believed there was anything more in their delight than the simple echo of their last few words. But I know better, who have had my walk also—the walk that never comes in a lifetime twice.

Alas! why cannot I take the arm of some male friend in mine, and renew that old sensation? Why cannot even you and I, dearest old wife, go through that fever a second time? Well, well; fifty years have not quenched the warmth of which that was the kindling; and perhaps in our quiet elderly way there is a sober joy that even Robert and Alice would not do well to scorn.

Meantime they have been walking up and down a sufficiently long time, and it is time to go in to Miss Standaside, who scarcely looks at the handsome couple till she cries out, "Oh, my dear Alice! I am so very, very glad," and runs straight out of the room.

I am not going to pretend that the opportunity

was quite neglected, for you have been told already that Robert was not a bashful man; but I can safely say that the three friends had a most orderly business-like supper together, and it was clearly shown, to the full satisfaction of their impartial judgment, that Robert's £200 a year, with enough saved to buy furniture, was quite sufficient to support the modest household they would be content with. And then Alice could set up a millinery establishment of her own—she and Miss Stand-aside—and Robert's skill as a purchaser would help them. They would make fortunes very fast, these hopeful people, and be happier than ever men and women were before; and in all their biography there should be no quarrel, no bills unpaid, no grey hairs, no tombstone until one should serve them both. Surely our human love is the image of something divine indeed, or it never could, even for a moment, pour out such a draught of the water of Paradise for our dry and thirsty lips.

Love on, young hearts, and dream on; and if the Great Father refuse the realisation of your vision here, he has surely something for us all above, for which it is worth our while to be deprived of even that radiant hope.

Next evening Robert said nothing about science, but produced a pretty little pearl ring; it did not cost much, but it would do its work, which work he defined as he placed it upon the proper finger, and said, significantly, "It may serve to warn other people off."

Alice blushed, but looked troubled. Already her heart had smitten her for the sake of John Harris. She had never given him intentional encouragement; their walks had begun before there was the least possibility of her being compromised by them; she had often since protested against them, and been assured that he would do them for any one; and yet she heartily wished that they had never begun. There is a sort of intuition which tells a lady—a milkmaid may be a real lady, and her occupation will not forfeit the privileges of her rank—when a man thinks himself to be making love, even though his method consist, like poor John's, in walking beside her for thirty minutes, and not speaking as many words.

So the gentle heart of Alice smote her when next she set out for her accustomed holiday. It need not have reproached her so heavily, if she had taken the obvious precaution of writing beforehand to tell her aunt of her engagement. But who does not know, that when one is thoroughly embarrassed, a hundred ideas present themselves at once, while the right one, so easy to distinguish at another time, either fails to come at all, or fails to gain attention in the crowd? Alice had not written, and she had to pay the penalty. Her aunt saw the ring before her gloves had been removed ten minutes; and when Alice took her

aside and told her story, it was easy to see that the old lady was not only grieved but wounded.

"Robert," she said, "appeared to have bewitched every one; he was lucky in business, and he was lucky in love; and he was most lucky whenever he wanted to push himself into John's place."

"Why," said Alice, "he offered to give up the situation for John, so that is rather a hard speech of yours, aunt. I don't mind what you say of me—you have been so kind that you are entitled to blame me—but I can't bear to hear that Robert is anything but the best well-wisher that John Harris will ever have."

"Yes, my dear, he might well give up the situation, when he knew that he had secured Alice Grey."

"Dear aunt, he knew nothing about it until two days ago, and neither did I."

"Then sit down, Alice, sit down for a minute and let me think. Alice, the old man and I have loved you as if you were our daughter, this many a year; and we hoped and meant that you would love us just as much—just as much. Don't stop me, girl; you may love us another way, but not the way we wanted. And John fell in with our plan like a good boy. When I would say, 'Look at Alice Grey, there's the girl for you, John,' he would answer, 'Yes, mother, she's the girl for me.' And many a time I saw him sit and watch you, and never say one word for love. Alice, if this is the two days' whim you tell me, give it up, and make my boy, and the old man and me, happy."

"Aunt," said poor Alice, with wet eyes, "it never, never can be. I loved Robert long ago, although I only knew his mind this week, and maybe my own too; and I cannot go back of my word nor break his heart. If ever I might have learned to love John, he did not speak in time, and now I can only be his sister, if you will let me. But you must not blame Robert, for indeed it could not be as you wish, even if he had never asked me, any more than John did."

Ah, Alice, are you only a mortal woman after all? Was there not angel enough in you to check that last glance at the difference between the bold lover and the timorous one?

The old lady looked at her steadily, and her face set itself hardly. "I have asked you for a favour, Alice Grey, and I shall never ask you for another."

"Dear, dear aunt, ask me for any other in all the world, and you shall have it; tell me to lie down under your feet, and I will let you trample on me, but I can't break Robert's heart—I can't, I can't, I can't!"

"Very well, I have nothing else to ask you. Robert may trample on you or let it alone, but I have no taste that way, I thank you."

Curious, that her face in its anger took exactly that aspect which John's had lately worn. Strange, too,



that her voice fell into a monotonous hollow tone that had been creeping into his utterances also. And yet, Alice, not so strange as you imagine, for the same passion that was now consuming her was strong in his heart also. He had been "cut out" in business, and, as he half-suspected, in love also. His father made things worse by continually praising his rival's ability, his industry, and his push. And John was jealous and revengeful, and yet angry with himself for being so, and conscious that his rival deserved his victories. Yet his hand *would* sometimes clench, and his teeth grind, in spite of him.

Alice was much alone that dreary day, for Mrs. Harris took aside now one and now another; and when the news was broken to them they lingered about in the garden or the field, not dreaming of church, and yet longing for any occupation. And the poor girl within looked very unlike one whose new engagement had promised, two days ago, to turn the world into a Paradise without a snake.

Evening came at last, and John brought round the gig.

"Come, darling," said old Mr. Harris, "I am going to drive you into town this evening."

"No, sir," interrupted John, "I shall do that myself, if you please, this last time."

"If you do," his father replied, "I hope you will have too much respect for her and yourself to say one unpleasant word; but Alice must decide. My dear, I will always love you like my child, and you shall treat me as your father. Say, then, shall I take care of you to-night?"

But John spoke before Alice could reply, and he spoke in that monotonous way which Alice had remarked before. "Listen, Alice; if I may not go, I shall think you are afraid of me. And I promise to bring you home quite safe, with no annoyance about my love, but on the contrary with a little hint which you and Robert ought to know, for it may be useful to you both."

Neither John's tone nor his look was very pleasant, but Alice thought perhaps he was schooling himself to behave well, and she resolved to show that she could trust him; therefore they got in together, but she was soon sorry for it.

For the first couple of miles he flogged the horse into a furious gallop, not speaking a word, but laughing a bitter little laugh under his breath. Then he reined in the panting creature, and let him almost walk.

In a minute or two more he tried to speak, but did not succeed until after two or three attempts, when he hissed out, in an intense passionate whisper, "So, Alice, it is all over between us."

Alice could only say, trembling while she spoke, "Nothing need be over that ever began. Why can I not be your sister?"

"That will never do. If you were my sister, the sin would be worse of wishing to marry you, and I never can cease from that, and I never will. But I told you I had something to say. Tell that man from me—you know the one I mean (he ought to be called Jacob, for he has supplanted me twice, and I suppose none of us went to church to-day for fear that story should be read to us)—I warn you to tell him to keep clear of me. I shall get out of his way, but ill will befall him if he ever comes into mine. Tell him it will be all the same to-morrow or in twenty years. I hate him; he will never be safe with me; if I have a pistol I shall shoot him; if a knife I shall stab him; if neither I shall fly at his throat. Tell him I am not safe. God knows I am sorry for it, but the devil knows I can't help myself. Ha—ha—ha! The world is queer, and one is best out of it."

With that he struck the horse so furious a blow, and repeated it so frequently, that in fifteen minutes Alice was safe at home, and fainting in Miss Standaside's arms.

(To be concluded.)

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## TO SILENCE.

HAST thou no language, O Silence?

Nothing to answer my cry?

Off have I sought for thy presence,

Lingering where thou art nigh;

Vocal thou art to a few,

Teacher tremendous, and true;

Why, then, for me no reply?

Sure I've prepared me to meet thee,

Chosen the fittest attire;

Surely I gladden to greet thee,

Loyal as liege could desire.

Wherefore, for all my appealing,

Com'st thou thy visage concealing,

Hid as the sun in its fire?

Can the knots only be cloven—

Knots in the truth that I weave—

Weaving a web that, when woven,

No passage to daylight will leave?

Truth that so tangled, like error,

Bringeth but darkness and terror,

How can the spirit receive?

Solve me the problems I ask thee,

Show me the working, and why;

Oh! for one moment unmask thee—

Speak to my pitiful cry!

Say, if the darkness is best for us,

Nay, if the night is but rest for us,

Surely the day draweth nigh?

Is it my sense that is deadened,  
 Long in abeyance grown weak?  
 Only through cloud-media reddened,  
 Dare we the sun-god to seek;  
 Perchance but in echoes that only  
 Are waked by these murmurings lonely,  
 My hearing could hear didst thou speak.

It may be thou couldst not deliver  
 The answer I ask for in vain,  
 Unless thou wouldst plunge me for ever  
 In the hopeless, the pitiless pain  
 Of good as a punishment granted,  
 Of pleasure for which we have panted,  
 That crush with the weight of their gain.

Still, if it must be but dumbly,  
 List to my passionate prayer—  
 Suffer me just to sit humbly  
 Low on thy throne's lowest stair;  
 It may be thy breast in its heaving,  
 With secrets past mortals' perceiving,  
 Will waken the slumbering air,

Till I too shall feel the pulsation,  
 Till it throngs with its throbbing my soul,  
 Bidding its doubting cessation;  
 Mighty in silent control;  
 And then I shall know thee withholding  
 Replies, till the time for unfolding  
 Truth as a wondrous whole.

A. JOHNSON-BROWN.

## STOLEN.

### PART I.



WILL begin my life-story as far back as I can remember. I should think I must have been about four years old, when on a cold winter's evening I was sitting on a large log of wood in a forest, very hungry and almost frozen with the cold, and an old man came up to me and said, "Well, little 'un, how is it you're here all alone, this time of day? why, you'll be frozen to death! You'd better go home to your mammy."

"I have no mammy," said I.

"Poor little dear!" said the old man, compassionately; and he came and sat down beside me. "Now just tell me all about it. How it is you're here all alone, and such a long way from any houses?"

"Jenny brought me here this morning, and told me to stay here until she came back, and she's been such a long time. I don't like Jenny. Do you know her?" said I, looking straight up into the old man's face.

"No, my dear," said he, smiling; "who is she?"

"Why, I don't know. I live with a lot of people—Jenny, Molly, Jacky, and all of them. But we don't live in houses, we always go about to different places. Molly is so kind; she cried when she kissed me this morning, and looked so sorry."

"Then I suppose you are a little gipsy—eh?"

"I don't know. The other day when I was out with Jenny I heard a little girl in a beautiful frock say, 'Oh, there's a gipsy woman!' and then she ran away with another little girl."

"Well, you must come along home with me now, because it's very dark; why, if it wasn't for this 'ere lantern of mine I couldn't even see your dear little face. My old woman will be wondering what has become of me, and my broth will be all cold if we're not quick. Mary will be so glad to see you. Do you know you're just like a little boy I had once?—poor Willie."

Well I remember—so well!—trotting along by the old man's side for a long time, until at last we came to a tiny little cottage. He lifted up the latch and took me into a cosy room, with very little furniture in it, but what there was, beautifully clean. There was a bright fire blazing in a large old-fashioned hearth, and on one side sat an old woman with silvery curls, and a snowy white cap and apron, who got up as soon as we entered, and exclaimed, "Why, what a little darling! where did you get him, Bill? Why, I declare! aint he just like our poor little Will as died? Come along, my pet, and warm your little toes; I'm sure they must be frozen to death in those dreadful shoes. Bless the child! he's got nothing on him but a few rags." And so she went on. It really seemed as if she couldn't do enough for me. I had a good hearty supper, and was tucked into a little crib, which I afterwards learned had been occupied by their own little boy forty years before.

And a happy life I spent with the old couple. Jenny never came to look for me, so I remained there as their own child.

When I was five, "daddy," as I was taught to call him, sent me to the village school, as he said all little boys and girls ought to learn to read and write. There I soon learned to do both, being naturally very quick; but I often got into trouble, not with the master, but with the other boys, who used to tease me because they said I was afraid to fight. They called me a coward and all kinds of ugly names, but after some time I did not mind it so much, because "mammy" used to tell me I was quite right never to fight, and that they would be punished for it, for if the master did not see them God always did.

As soon as I was able I used to read to the old folks every evening out of the Bible and some little books the teacher had given me. The old man always looked wonderfully delighted as I read on without even stopping at the long words. I remember him saying one night, after I had been reading

as usual, "Mammy, he'll be the Lord Mayor if he's only spared; why, just think of a young babby of seven being able to read off like that. We must send him to Miss Browne's next year. I think I might be able to afford it if we were careful, for I've made up my mind he shall never be kept back for the want of learning. Why, you know he's a born genius."

But things were not destined to continue so happily. The first big cloud came over my life; for poor mammy, who had now attained her seventieth year, was taken ill with rheumatic fever, and after two months' severe illness died. Daddy was almost broken-hearted at the loss of his beloved wife. For weeks he was quite inconsolable, and I began to fear he would die too unless he was aroused. I remained at home to attend to the poor old man. He was quite unable to continue his occupation of wood-cutter, which troubled him very much, as he had been just able to save a little for future days. Knowing this, I asked him if he could spare me for an hour or two every day to go and cut wood for him. He hesitated a long time, for he thought I should find it too hard work; but after a great deal of coaxing on my part, it was agreed I should go every morning at half-past five, and return in time to prepare the breakfast, for we had no one to wait upon us now that poor mammy was dead. So things continued for some time, until after much practice I had become quite an accomplished wood-cutter, and as soon as he was better able to be left, I went back again to work after breakfast, and returned about four, when I used to go home, have a substantial tea, and read in the evening to daddy.

So we got on very comfortably; but he was unable to go out to work again. He seemed to be fast breaking up. He had become deaf, and at times his memory failed him sadly. However, he lingered on for two years after his wife's death, when one day, as I went in to breakfast, he called me to his bed and said, "Willie, you have been a good boy, and God will bless you for it. I don't know what I should have done without you since my poor Mary died." Here he burst into tears.

I could not understand his looking and speaking so strangely. His voice was so weak that I could scarcely hear him.

"Aren't you well, daddy?" said I. "Why, I thought you were so much better last night."

"Ah, my boy, we generally get a little better just before we die. I suppose it is a blessing conferred upon us by God, that we may better be able to make known our wishes before leaving this world for ever. Poor Willie! what will become of you? I feel I must die very soon, and then you will be left all alone. But try always to be a good boy, and when you are tempted to do anything wrong say to yourself, 'Daddy wouldn't have liked me to do it.' Come nearer and give me your hand, and don't cry so, dear, or else I

shall not be able to say all I want to. Try and think all is done for the best. Mr. Jones, the schoolmaster, will arrange everything for you when I'm gone. He promised me so three months ago, and you must try and look up to him and respect him, for he is very fond of you. I have been able to save a little money, which you will find in the cupboard, in a small money-box, inside that old brown basin on the top shelf. And as to my burial, why I should like to be laid alongside of my Mary, if it could be managed."

Here again he leant back on his pillow, and remained silent for some time, when I could hear nothing but my own sobs. I started suddenly and looked up at him, for I had heard a queer rattling noise in his throat, and he had turned perfectly white.

Very soon he opened his eyes, smiled, and said, "Good-bye, dear child," then closed his eyes for ever. I threw my arms round the cold corpse, and after again and again vainly calling upon him to speak once more, I seemed to lose all sense, and remained in the same position for hours.

### "THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

199. During our Lord's public ministry he gave a practical proof that his mercy was not limited in its application "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Quote it.

200. Mention the four parables recorded in St. Mark's Gospel.

201. On the first occasion that the Pharisees are mentioned in Scripture a name is applied to them which was afterwards solemnly confirmed by our Lord. Quote both passages.

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 479.

187. Seven times. 1. By Shishak (1 Kings xiv. 26); 2. Asa (1 Kings xv. 18); 3. Jehoash, King of Judah (2 Kings xii. 18); 4. Jehoash, King of Israel (2 Kings xiv. 14); 5. Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 8); 6. Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 15); 7. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv. 13).

188. The friend at midnight (Luke xi. 5); the importunate widow (Luke xviii. 2).

189. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 9); in reply to the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," &c. &c. (Luke xi. 4).

190. Obadiah.

191. Devil (John vi. 70); son of perdition (John xvii. 12).

192. In Gen. xxv. 29 we read of Isaac's death, which took place after Jacob's return from Laban, with whom he spent fourteen years at least. (See Gen. xxix. 20—27.)

193. "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mark viii. 33).

## BIBLE NOTES.

THE UNJUST STEWARD (Luke xvi. 1-9).



HERE was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods." To his disciples our Lord addressed this parable, to set forth (as some maintain) the danger of a love of money, and the absolute impossibility of serving God and mammon. Perhaps it was meant to show the right use of wealth, and how it should be employed. The steward was one in whose hands his master had put the management of all his property, and on whose honesty he implicitly relied. In those times he had to dispense their portions of food to the different members of the household, and to give the servants or slaves their portion in due season. This steward wasted his master's goods, and what belonged to him he misapplied. Selfish principles were the rule of his conduct (for when detected he thought only of himself), his duty was neglected. The abuse of his master's property attracted the notice of some who accused him, and that the charge was based on truth is clear from the steward's after conduct.

"How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." On hearing the accusation, the master takes action at once, by summoning his steward to his presence, and when there he put to him a pointed question. "Is it true that thou who hast been entrusted with the guardianship of all that I possess, hast thus turned on me and treated me so basely?" No defence was set up. A requirement was made of him to give an account of what he had received and how he had expended it, that every transaction might be brought to the light. This is implied in the demand, "Give an account of thy stewardship." If guilty, everything which had been entrusted to his charge was to be taken out of his hands, because he was unworthy of any place of trust.

"What shall I do? I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed." In this and the following verses we have presented to our notice the artful cunning of the man in providing for his own wants. But first he takes counsel with himself, thus intimating a secret device to be communicated only to some who would be accomplices in the fraud he contemplates, and profit by it, and so their services might be counted on. The question he asks himself shows that he was literally bewildered. He knew not what to do, or whither to turn. Had he been a penitent, he would have tried to dig, though his former style of life had totally unfitted him for labour; and if he did not succeed in that way to support himself, he would have begged his bread from door to door;

but his pride proved a formidable barrier to this expedient.

"He called every one of his lord's debtors unto him." Such is the resolution he arrived at after taking thought with himself. He summoned them singly and privately one after the other, in order to secure greater secrecy, and in this consisted one part of his worldly prudence. He thus in winding up his affairs still further cheats his master by acts of injustice, in order to make friends of the debtors. He makes each write out his own bill, so that he may have the evidence under his own hand as a proof that it was his act, and so protect himself, and secure the tenant on his side. He bids each to do what he told them quickly, to prevent the effects of any future misgivings on the part of the tenant's conscience. To one debtor he remits half, to the other one-fifth of his debt. No reason is assigned for making this distinction. By these means he procured their friendship—but what dependence could be placed on such a friendship?—and so saved himself from sinking into poverty.

"The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." To avoid ambiguity it would be well to translate "the lord" as "the master," or "the landlord," and to remember that our Lord does not begin to speak directly in his own person till verse 9. The master praised the unjust steward. His injustice is mentioned, lest it should be supposed that shrewdness can be a substitute for honesty. He praised him because he acted prudently, and this conveys the meaning better than "wisely." His foresight and diligence in providing for his future wants display the wisdom of this world, and may be commended to worldly men, but the means he employed to accomplish his ends should be held in utter abhorrence.

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." These are the words in which the application of the parable is conveyed. Christ in effect says to his disciples, "Ye have heard what the earthly lord said to his steward, now hear what I, your heavenly Lord, have to say to you who are my stewards. Wealth is at the disposal of some of you; that which the steward used dishonestly is often a temptation to fraud—is deceptive as well as uncertain; still be it your concern to elicit true riches from it—to make friends of that which is naturally your enemy, by your labours of love and works of charity. This, if you do, when you fail—that is, die—you shall be received into everlasting habitations, and inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world."